

In the Specification:

Please delete the entire paragraph beginning on page 23, line 26 and ending on page 24, line 5 with the following amended paragraph:

Preferably, donor molecules are fluorescent organic dyes derivatized for attachment to the terminal 3'-carbon or terminal 5'-carbon of the probe via a linking moiety. Preferably, acceptor molecules are also organic dyes, which may or may not be fluorescent, depending on the embodiment of the invention. For example, in a preferred embodiment of the invention, the acceptor molecule is fluorescent. Generally whether the acceptor molecule is fluorescent or simply releases the transferred energy from the reporter by non-radiative decay, the absorption band of the acceptor should substantially overlap the fluorescent emission band of the donor. Non-fluorescent acceptor molecules that absorb energy from excited donor molecules, but which do not release the energy radiatively, are referred to as "dark quenchers." Presently preferred dark quenchers are the "Black Hole quenchers" described in the commonly owned copending U.S. Patent Application No. 09/567,863, entitled "Dark Quenchers for Donor Acceptor Energy Transfer," filed on May 9, 2000 and bearing Attorney Docket No. 019079-000500US, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

On page 26, line 26, please delete fragment sentence "presently preferred".